

**Accountability System Development for 2015
Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)**

State Assessments Evaluated in 2015 Accountability

Background

The 2014 accountability ratings represent the full implementation of statutory requirements found in House Bill 3 (HB 3), 81st Texas Legislature, 2009, and transitional changes of House Bill 5 (HB 5), 83rd Texas Legislature, 2013. Beginning in 2015, further changes are required by HB 5 to include additional postsecondary readiness indicators. In addition, several changes to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) program for the 2014-15 school year were communicated by letter to school districts in August 2014.

The Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) will review several topics related to changes to the Texas Assessment Program that directly impact the 2015 accountability rating system. The document, Options for Index Targets and Required Improvement, will review options for 2015 index targets given the changes to the STAAR testing program described below.

Changes to the Texas Assessment Program affecting All Four Indexes

Each of the following changes will impact all four performance indexes and participation data used in the System Safeguard results for 2015 accountability.

1. Phase-in 1 Level II performance standards for STAAR continue through the 2014–2015 school year,
2. New Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) mathematics curriculum implemented for grades 3-8,
3. Planned changes to the assessments for students who receive special education services, and
4. Denial of Double-Testing Waiver submitted to avoid double-testing accelerated middle school students taking Algebra I.

Assessment Topic #1: Maintaining Phase-in 1 Level II performance standards. The Commissioner of Education’s decision to maintain the Phase-in 1 Level II performance standards through the 2014-15 school year should have no direct effect on 2015 accountability. However, the adjustment for a three-step plan of incremental movement toward the Final Level II performance standard affects projected accountability goals for the future. The three-step phase-in plan for STAAR performance standards calls for:

- Phase-in 1 Level II performance standards maintained for 2014–2015,
- Phase-in 2 Level II performance standards implemented beginning in 2015–2016,
- Phase-in 3 Level II performance standards implemented beginning in 2018–2019, and
- Final Level II performance standards implemented in the 2021–2022 school year.

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Assessment Topic #2: Implementation of TEKS mathematics curriculum. Adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in April 2012, revised TEKS mathematics curriculum standards for grades K–8 were fully implemented in classroom instruction during the 2014–2015 school year. The spring 2015 STAAR mathematics assessments for grades 3–8 will be used to develop new STAAR performance standards during summer 2015. Students who participate in the spring 2015 STAAR grades 3–8 mathematics administrations will receive a raw score prior to the end of the school year. In August 2015, updated student confidential reports and test data files will be sent to school districts based on the new student performance standards.

STAAR Mathematics Bridge Study. The grades 3 – 8 mathematics STAAR results used for the 2015 accountability ratings will not be based on the new student performance standards that will be set in summer 2015. Equivalent performance standards will be developed for accountability purposes only that establish a link or “bridge” between the spring 2015 STAAR grades 3–8 mathematics tests and the previous (2014) mathematics tests.

For accountability purposes only, the state plans to establish a link between the new spring 2015 STAAR grades 3–8 mathematics tests and the previous mathematics tests to determine equivalent performance standards. The STAAR mathematics bridge studies will compare performance on the new STAAR mathematics assessments to performance on the 2012–2014 STAAR mathematics assessments in order to ensure that the performance standards applied for 2015 accountability purposes are equivalent to the original STAAR mathematics performance standards. So, for 2015 accountability, districts will be held to the old performance standards. Information about student performance in relation to the new performance standards will be available in fall 2015, but will not be used for accountability purposes in 2015.

The bridge study process will statistically map the previous performance standards to the new assessments using student performance data using common items appearing on both the prior version and the new version of the STAAR mathematics assessments. The 2015 state and federal accountability results will be based on student performance on the 2015 assessments at each equivalent passing standard:

- Phase-in 1 Level II
- Final Level II
- Advanced Level III

Student Success Initiative (SSI) for Mathematics suspended. During the transitional year to the revised TEKS-based assessments, the Commissioner of Education has suspended the Student Success Initiative (SSI) requirement that students in grades 5 and 8 in the 2014–2015 school year must pass the STAAR mathematics assessment in order to move onto the next grade level.

- Only one administration of STAAR mathematics for grades 5 and 8 will be used for 2015 accountability;
- The first and second SSI administrations of STAAR reading for grades 5 and 8 will be used for 2015 accountability.

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ELL Progress Measures. For students tested in grades 3–8 mathematics, the ELL student expectations used to determine the ELL Progress Measure results will be aligned to the STAAR Mathematics Bridge Study equivalent performance standards.

- ELL Progress Measures will be available for use in accountability for students tested in grades 3–8 mathematics;
- Over 120,000 ELL students in Years 2 – 4 will continue to be included in 2015 accountability for all subjects.

Assessment Topic #3: Planned changes to Special Education assessments. STAAR assessments are available to students who receive special education services, and the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee determines which assessment is appropriate for each special education student based upon his or her individual needs. The following are changes to the available assessments for special education students planned for 2014-15.

Elimination of STAAR Modified/Administration of STAAR Accommodated (STAAR A). STAAR Modified was an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards available for students receiving special education services who met the participation requirements. The state administered the STAAR Modified assessments for the final time during the 2013-2014 assessment cycle. The U.S. Department of Education has informed states that assessments based on modified standards for students served by special education no longer count toward accountability purposes after the 2013-2014 school year.

The STAAR A assessment, administered for the first time in spring 2015, is the accommodated version of the general STAAR assessment available for students that meet eligibility requirements. STAAR A is intended for students with disabilities receiving special education services and students with dyslexia and related disorders (as defined by Texas Education Code §38.003) being served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A student may take STAAR in some subjects and STAAR A in other subjects, depending on eligibility.

- STAAR A is the online accommodated version of the STAAR general assessment with the same student performance standards, therefore results will be available in June, 2015.
- Over 100,000 students were tested on STAAR Modified during school year 2013-2014. It is assumed that many of those students will be eligible for and test on 2015 administrations of STAAR A.

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The following table provides the statewide participation and performance rates in reading and mathematics for students receiving special education services on the STAAR assessments in the 2013-14 school year.

2013-14 Statewide Accountability Data				
Participation				
Special Education students enrolled on the day of testing	Reading		Mathematics	
	Number of Participants	Percent of Total	Number of Participants	Percent of Total
STAAR Regular	162,111	53.1%	132,275	51.3%
STAAR w/ no accommodations	60,630	19.9%	38,911	15.1%
STAAR w/ available accommodations	101,481	33.2%	93,364	36.2%
STAAR Modified	111,662	36.6%	96,964	37.6%
STAAR Alternate	31,530	10.3%	28,407	11.0%
Special Education Participation Count	305,303	100.0%	257,646	100.0%
Proficiency				
	Reading		Mathematics	
	Number Met Phase-in 1 Level II Standard	Percent of Participants Met Standard by Test Type	Number Met Phase-in 1 Level II Standard	Percent of Participants Met Standard by Test Type
STAAR Regular	69,591	42.9%	65,628	49.6%
STAAR w/ no accommodations	31,513	52.0%	24,469	62.9%
STAAR w/ available accommodations	38,078	37.5%	41,159	44.1%
STAAR Modified	82,473	73.9%	64,838	66.9%
STAAR Alternate	28,698	91.0%	26,036	91.7%
Special Education Proficiency Count	180,762	59.2%	156,502	60.7%

Redesigned STAAR Alternate 2 implemented. House Bill 5 also required a redesign of STAAR Alternate with implementation in February 2015. STAAR Alternate 2 is a standardized item-based assessment administered to students in a one-on-one setting and submitted through an online form.

The new STAAR Alternate 2 assessment was redesigned to meet the diverse needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities enrolled in grades 3 through 8 and EOC subjects. To meet requirements of the legislation and maintain an appropriate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities, a question-based approach to the assessment has been implemented for the redesign of STAAR Alternate. The assessment will consist of 24 scripted questions. The test materials

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will include a test administrator booklet with the scripted questions, and a student booklet that contains stimulus images and text for answers selection. This design allows for standardization of the assessment and eliminates the need for teachers to prepare tasks or materials.

The STAAR Alternate 2 mathematics test is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) mathematics curriculum standards implemented in the 2014-15 school year.

- New performance standards for STAAR Alternate 2 will be set in spring 2015;
- STAAR Alternate 2 results will be reported for the first time with in June 2015;
- There is no opportunity for preview reporting if used in 2015 accountability.

New STAAR Alternate 2 score codes. Beginning with spring 2015 administration of STAAR Alternate 2, additional information is collected on test answer documents for students with a severe medical or cognitive impairment that may not be able to complete any part of the assessment:

- Medical Exception
- No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR)

The ARD committee will make the determination based on eligibility requirement documents after reviewing medical and educational records. The decision must be documented in the student's IEP along with evidence to support the determination. Students tested on STAAR Alternate 2 and coded for a medical exception or No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR) will not impact the System Safeguard Participation or accountability performance results.

Plans for new STAAR Alternate 2 test score codes in 2015 Accountability

In 2014, all STAAR Alternate results were included in the Participation calculation. The STAAR Alternate assessment categories included category 4: "No Response Observed" was also included in the Participation numerator, thereby crediting students in the System Safeguard Participation Rates for Reading and Mathematics. The test answer documents were then excluded from Performance calculations. For 2015, the score code "N" of No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR) will continue to credit the student as a test participant and be excluded from the performance index calculations.

Federal assessment data file submissions allow states to exclude a student with a significant medical emergency from the participation rate calculation. Test answer documents coded "M" for Medical Exception will be excluded from the System Safeguard Participation Rates for Reading and Mathematics. The following table provides a summary of test answer document score code values and their use in 2015 Systems Safeguards.

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2015 Systems Safeguards				
Test Answer Document Score Code	Participation		Performance	
	Included in Total Students	Included in Tested (Participating) Count	Included in Total Tests by Subject	Included in # at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard (Passing) Count
S – Scored tests from STAAR Grades 3 – 8 and EOC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TELPAS Reading (students in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools)	Yes	Yes	No	n/a
N - No Authentic Academic Response*	Yes	Yes	No	n/a
A - Absent	Yes	No	n/a	n/a
O - Other (tested but not scored)	Yes	No	n/a	n/a
M - Medical Exception*	No	n/a	n/a	n/a

* STAAR Alternate 2 Only

Assessment Topic #4: Double-Testing Waiver. In August 2014, the United States Department of Education (USDE) denied the agency's waiver request submitted January 27, 2014, in order to avoid double-testing accelerated middle school students taking Algebra I. The Department response letter to Texas emphasized their belief of the importance of students required to take a higher-level mathematics assessment in high school, in order to ensure that the students continue to receive challenging content in mathematics and to hold high schools accountable for improving the achievement of all students. Agency correspondence to school districts issued *Middle School Students Taking Algebra I* on November 10, 2014 provides the latest information (<http://tea.texas.gov/index4.aspx?id=25769818803>).

Background on the Texas waiver request:

- About 90,000 students were enrolled in middle school and received instruction in Algebra I are administered the end-of-course (EOC) Algebra I test in the spring 2014;
- The waiver is requested for the specific federal requirement to assess all students at least once in high school (in reading, mathematics, and science);
- As a result of HB 5, Algebra I is the only mathematics assessment available at the high school level.

One option for the agency is to track students from grade nine through graduation to determine if the student took any of the testing options available in high school. These include the optional STAAR Algebra II test (currently scheduled beginning in the 2015-16 school year) or any one of three approved substitute assessments for STAAR Algebra I (PSAT Mathematics, SAT Mathematics, or ACT Mathematics) currently available and authorized in commissioner rule.

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If implemented, the testing requirements could be measured based on the longitudinal graduation cohorts developed for the Class of 2018. It is unclear if Texas is required to address the participation of high school students in the upcoming school year.

Beginning with 9th grade students entering in the 2014-15 school year, this option tracks the students from each graduating cohort who take Algebra I in middle school across their high school career prior to graduation. If these students take the optional STAAR Algebra II test that is currently scheduled to be available beginning in the 2015-16 school year or if these students take one of the three approved substitute assessments for STAAR Algebra I (PSAT Mathematics, SAT Mathematics, or ACT Mathematics) currently available and authorized in commissioner rule, those results would be used to meet federal participation and performance requirements for a mathematics assessment at the high school level.

For 2015 state and federal accountability, if a student takes the STAAR Algebra I assessment and a STAAR mathematics grade level assessment, only the results of the Algebra I assessment will be included in the accountability calculations for the campus and the district where the student tested.

Texas Assessment Program Changes affecting specific Indexes

Index 1: Inclusion or exclusion of new Special Education Assessments. Index 1 is the base data used for the System Safeguards, which drive the Texas Accountability and Intervention System (TAIS) and federally required identification of Focus and Priority Schools. The U.S. Department of Education requires a submission of assessment results used for federal accountability each year.

Index 2: Limited STAAR Progress Measures available. Changes to various aspects of the STAAR program affect the agency's ability to report student progress on the assessments.

- STAAR Progress Measures not available in 2014-15:
 - STAAR progress measures for mathematics in grades 4–8,
 - STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure, and
 - STAAR progress measures for student in grades 4–8 that tested in the prior year on 2014 STAAR Modified in any subject.
- Additional STAAR Progress Measures available in 2014-15:
 - Grade 7 writing, and
 - Eligible STAAR A students who took STAAR or STAAR L in 2013–2014.

Table 1 below displays the changes to the student progress measures. Student progress measures are available to students tested on the STAAR general (regular) assessment in reading for grades 4 – 8, and the English II EOC in high school. The only student progress measures available on the alternate (special education) assessments are for students tested on STAAR A (Accommodated) in grades 4-8 for eligible STAAR A students who took a STAAR or STAAR L in 2014. Progress measures are available for students tested in Algebra I on STAAR EOC (regular) and STAAR A (for eligible students). Students tested on grade 7 writing on STAAR (regular) and STAAR A (for eligible students) may also receive progress measure results.

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Changes to STAAR Progress Measures from 2014 to 2015

2015 Assessment	General Assessment	Test Language	Assessments for Students with Disabilities
ELEMENTARY GRADE LEVELS			
Reading			
Grade 4	STAAR Regular	English Spanish	STAAR A* Modified Alternate
Grade 5	STAAR Regular	English Spanish	STAAR A* Modified Alternate
Mathematics			
Grade 4	STAAR Regular	English Spanish	Modified Alternate
Grade 5	STAAR Regular	English Spanish	Modified Alternate
MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS			
Reading			
Grade 6	STAAR Regular	English	STAAR A* Modified Alternate
Grade 7	STAAR Regular	English	STAAR A* Modified Alternate
Grade 8	STAAR Regular	English	STAAR A* Modified Alternate
Mathematics			
Grade 6	STAAR Regular	English	Modified Alternate
Grade 7	STAAR Regular	English	Modified Alternate
Grade 8	STAAR Regular	English	Modified Alternate
Writing			
Grade 7	STAAR Regular	English	STAAR A*
HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS			
Reading			
English I → English II	STAAR Regular	English	STAAR A* Alternate
Mathematics			
Algebra I	STAAR Regular STAAR L	English	STAAR A* Modified Alternate

New in 2015

* 2015 STAAR A (Accommodated) progress measures for grades 3-8 will be calculated in reading and writing only for eligible STAAR A students who took a STAAR or STAAR L in 2014.

Note: STAAR Progress Measures for students in Accelerated Instruction and Testing are available for reading STAAR (Regular) English and Spanish test versions, and Algebra I STAAR (Regular) and STAAR L.

Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps. In 2014, changes were made to the minimum size criteria for the identification of the two lowest performance race/ethnicity groups in the previous year. The 2014 appeals regarding Index 3 were primarily related to the index targets evaluated for school districts with only one campus. The comments received during the rule adoption process regarding Index 3 included comments referencing small numbers of students in challenging settings.

In addition, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) option available to school districts generated questions from districts about the impact on state accountability. Following the April 4, 2014, TEA correspondence regarding the relationship between CEP participation and compensatory education funding under the Foundation School Program, a second correspondence was on September 2, 2014, in which TEA clarified that In order to comply with state and federal legislative mandates, it is necessary

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that each school district and charter school determine the economic disadvantaged status of each student for PEIMS reporting purposes.

Agency staff recommend no changes to the Index 3 methodology for 2015 accountability.

Index 4: Expansion of postsecondary readiness indicators. (Discussed as a separate agenda item)

Review of ELL Transition for Inclusion in Accountability. Comments from the ATAC on the inclusion of ELLs in 2014 accountability is needed to ensure that no changes are necessary for 2015. See attached *2014 Accountability Manual, Appendix I – Inclusion of ELLs in 2014 and Beyond*.

Four appeals to the 2014 accountability rating were based on ELL accountability rules. Two campus appeals were based not meeting the Index 1 target due to a small number of ELLs with no available ELL Progress Measure. Two additional campus appeals to Index 4 results were based on the exclusion of ELL students enrolled in U.S. School less than four years and tested in English test version. The ATAC is requested to review and confirm the appropriate inclusion/exclusion of ELL students for each index, specifically related to ELL with parental denials for bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional services and ELL/special education students tested on alternative tests.

Circumstances referenced in appeal	Index 1	Index 2	Index 3	Index 4
Parental Denial of Service	No ELL Progress Measure calculated	STAAR Progress Measure available	n/a	n/a
Special Education/Alternative test (STAAR Modified or STAAR Alternate)	No ELL Progress Measure calculated	STAAR Progress Measure available	n/a	Only available in English test versions